

Sleep: Why we need it and how to get more of it

By: Stacie Chapman, LCPC

Sleep. It can be your enemy or your friend. One in five Americans does not get enough sleep. Sleep deprivation has an effect on a person's mood, performance and health. People who suffer from chronic sleep deprivation are at higher risk for high blood pressure, heart attack, diabetes, obesity and lower immune system functioning.

Exercise is a great strategy for improving sleep. People who exercise 20 to 30 minutes a day get more sleep each night. It is important to remember that the body needs to be cool in order to fall asleep. After exercising, it can take up to 6 hours for the body's temperature to cool down so plan your workout accordingly!

Caffeine, alcohol and nicotine consumption also impact the body's ability to fall asleep and stay asleep. Caffeine stays in a person's system for long periods of time. In fact, after six hours only half of the caffeine a person ingested is gone. If drinking something with caffeine in it, it is best to pick a time to stop (usually around lunch time) and switch to a non caffeinated drink.

People who drink alcohol before bed claim that it helps them relax and sleep better. While it is true that alcohol can relax you in the short term, it prevents the body from entering the deep sleep it needs to feel adequately restored. People who smoke nicotine claim that smoking a cigarette before bed is a great way to fall asleep. Again, while it is true that a cigarette can be relaxing in the short term, people who smoke before bed sleep lighter and wake up frequently due to withdrawal symptoms.

Just making these simple changes can improve the quality and quantity of your sleep. If you would like more information about this topic including the importance of a sleep hygiene routine and the effect of melatonin supplements on the body, PERS in conjunction with Fit to Win offers a monthly sleep hygiene class. The next class is April 18, 2011 at 11:00 am in the Upton Conference Room of the DiLorenzo TRICARE Health Clinic. For more information or to sign up for the class, please call Fit to Win at 703-692-8776.



What is the EAP?

The Employee Assistance Program's (EAP) mission is to ensure the well-being of employees by assisting them in resolving issues that may be adversely impacting work or home. The EAP provides one-on-one problem assessment, short-term counseling, referrals to community resources, and crisis intervention.

In addition to working with you on an individual basis, we conduct a variety of educational workshops and classes. We are frequently asked to speak at employee orientation sessions and offer monthly supervisor training classes.

Visit the EAP website:

[http://
www.narmc.amedd.army.mil/
dilorenzo/pers.asp](http://www.narmc.amedd.army.mil/dilorenzo/pers.asp)

(Click on the EAP/PERS tab on the left)

Inside this Issue:

Page 2

- Do I worry too much?

Page 3

- Upcoming Workshops
 - Ask the EAP

Page 4

- Alcohol is Awareness Month

Do I worry too much ?

Most of us have a lot on our minds on a daily basis. Especially during stressful times, the feelings of uncertainty and concern can be heightened. You might find that your mind races or that you have physical sensations of a fast heartbeat. Do you ever wonder if your responses are normal? Or have you wondered when will these feelings go away?

Feelings of anxiety can be a common response to stress. However, for some people these anxious responses can be felt more intensely and more frequently, leading to a disruption in their lives. When this happens, it is possible that underlying these emotional and physical responses are symptoms of an anxiety disorder. According to Mental Health America, more than 40 million Americans are affected by an anxiety disorder each year. There are different kinds of anxiety disorders as described below:



Generalized Anxiety Disorder is described as experiencing chronic and exaggerated worry for six months or more. A person with this disorder might always be expecting the worst to happen or feel like they have no control over the constant worries. Many people also experience physical symptoms such as fatigue, trembling, headaches, or an upset stomach.

A *Panic Disorder* is characterized by sudden feelings of fear or terror. These “panic attacks” are accompanied with distressing physical responses such as a pounding heart, shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness, or feeling unreal.

Phobias refer to an excessive and irrational fear of something that does not generally pose a high risk of harm. Some people might have a *specific phobia* such as a fear of spiders or elevators. *Social Phobia* refers to an overwhelming anxiety about being uncomfortable, embarrassed or scrutinized by others. A person might try to avoid social situations or spend a great deal of time worrying about it in advance. These responses could also be connected to specific situations such as public speaking.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder involves repeated, intrusive, and unwanted thoughts. To try to reduce or control these obsessive thoughts a person engages in repeating a certain behavior or ritual such as hand washing.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder can occur in response to experiencing some type of traumatic event in which it is felt that one's life or safety is in jeopardy. Such symptoms might include nightmares or flashbacks about the event, irritability, and feelings of numbness.

If you experience symptoms related to any of the anxiety disorders described above please know that there are effective treatment resources and support available. It is recommended that you consult with your doctor or a mental health professional to further assess and understand your symptoms. Your EAP can also provide additional information and guidance for seeking treatment.

For more Information:

<http://www.adaa.org/>

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml>

<http://www.freedomfromfear.org/>

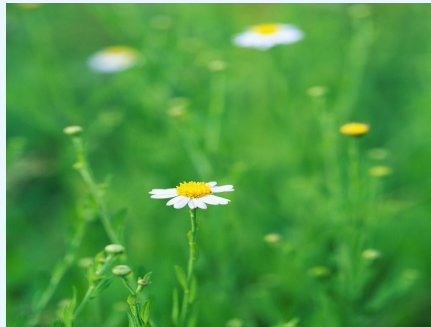
Upcoming Workshops

April 2011

7

Supervisory Training Series
(Managing Difficult Employees)
Motivation 101

9:00 - 12:00 am
Upton Conference Rm. (#219)
DTHC, Pentagon



26

Supervisory Training Series
(Working Styles)

10:00 - 12:00 pm
Upton Conference Rm. (#219)
DTHC, Pentagon

May 2011

5

Supervisory Training
(for Supervisors and Managers of civil-
ian Personnel)

9:30 - 11:30 pm
Upton Conference Rm. (#219)
DTHC, Pentagon

12

Enhancing Communication

9:30-11:30 am
Upton Conference Rm. (#219)
DTHC, Pentagon

24

Stress Management

10:00 - 12:00 pm
Upton Conference Rm. (#219)
DTHC, Pentagon

June 2011

7

Balancing Work Family

11:00 - 12:30 pm
Upton Conference Rm. (#219)
DTHC, Pentagon

9

Supervisory Training
(for Supervisors and Managers of Civil-
ian Personnel)

9:30 - 11:30 am
Upton Conference Rm. (#219)
DTHC, Pentagon

21

Brown Bag Lunch
(Raising Emotional Intelligent Children)

12:00 - 1:00 pm
Upton Conference Rm. (#219)
DTHC, Pentagon

Q: How will using the EAP affect my job security?

A: Using the EAP will not adversely affect your job status or your eligibility for promotion. Some people think that going to talk to a counselor puts their career in jeopardy. In fact, many who do seek assistance find that resolving the problem actually improves their well-being and has positive effects on their job performance and attendance. Failing to recognize and resolve personal problems which adversely affect job performance may actually pose a greater risk to job security.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

According to the National Council of Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, "Alcohol Awareness Month began as a way of reaching the American Public with information on the disease of alcoholism—that it is a treatable disease, not a moral weakness, and that alcoholics can and do recover." It is also a way to encourage greater awareness of the risks associated with alcohol and substance use. Part of these efforts has been an Alcohol-Free Weekend, which generally takes place the first weekend of April. Choosing to participate in these 3 alcohol and substance free days can provide insight into how your use could be impacting your life. If you find that abstaining from alcohol use causes you distress or discomfort it is highly recommended that you consult with a medical or substance abuse professional. Your EAP is also available to provide more information or talk with you further about your or a loved one's alcohol or substance use. In support of Alcohol Awareness Month below are few educational tidbits.



Test your knowledge - True or False



1. A drink can be defined as 8 ounces of wine.
 2. Moderate drinking is defined as no more than 1 drink a day for women and no more than 2 drinks a day for men.
 3. Binge drinking is a term used for consuming a large amount of alcohol in a short amount of time.
 4. The only risk associated with excess alcohol use is cirrhosis, a liver disease.
 5. The progression of alcoholism appears to be faster in women than in men.
 6. Children who drink alcohol before the age of 15 are 5 times more likely than those who start after the age of 21 to have alcohol problems when they are adults.
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1. False. A drink is defined as 5 ounces of table wine, 12 ounces of beer, or 1.5 ounces of liquor. It is important to know and monitor not only the number of drinks but also the amount.
 2. True.
 3. True. Binge drinking is sometimes thought of as "purposeful" drinking with an intent to get intoxicated. It is defined as more than 4 drinks in 2 hours for men and more than 3 drinks in 2 hours for women. Alcohol poisoning is one of the most serious dangers of binge drinking which can lead to vomiting, slowed breathing, seizures, unconsciousness or even death.
 4. False. Alcohol use can contribute to a wide range of health problems including cancer, heart disease, and stroke. It is also associated with increased risk of injury such as auto accidents, self-inflicted harm, and violence towards others.
 5. True. Research indicates that women are more vulnerable than men to the medical consequences of use. A woman's body tends to have less water than a man's which causes the blood alcohol content to reach higher levels faster.
 6. True. It is important to educate children and teens about the risks associated with alcohol & substance use. Talk to your kids regularly about how to make healthy choices and resist peer pressure.

Make an EAP Appointment: Call 703-692-8917 to schedule an appointment that is convenient for you. The EAP is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 4:00pm.

The EAP is located in the DiLorenzo TRICARE Health Clinic (DTHC), which is located in the Pentagon. The clinic is on the 1st floor of the eighth corridor, near the north parking entrance.